

Stellate Ganglion Block

WHAT IS A STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK?

A stellate ganglion block (SGB) is a minimally invasive procedure used to relieve pain and other symptoms by targeting the stellate ganglion, a group of nerves in the neck that are part of the sympathetic nervous system. The procedure involves injecting a local anesthetic into this area to temporarily disrupt nerve signals, which can help reduce pain, improve circulation, or alleviate certain neurological symptoms.

WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM A STELLATE GANGLION BLOCK?

Patients experiencing conditions such as:

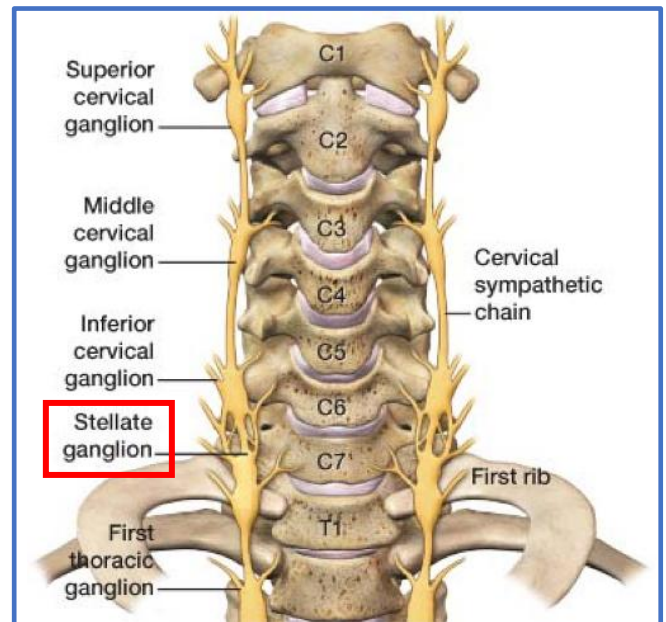
- Complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS)
- Chronic head, neck, chest, or upper limb pain
- Postherpetic neuralgia (pain after shingles)
- Raynaud's disease or poor hand circulation
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Hot flashes or excessive sweating related to nerve dysfunction

HOW DOES THE PROCEDURE WORK?

- **Procedure Technique:** X-ray guidance (fluoroscopy) is used for precision. A physician inserts a small needle near the stellate ganglion, located along the front of the neck. A contrast dye is used to confirm needle placement, followed by the injection of a local anesthetic and possibly steroid.
- **Medication Effect:** The anesthetic temporarily blocks nerve signals, which can reduce pain, inflammation, or overactive sympathetic responses. Effects may last from hours to weeks, depending on the condition and individual response.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS AND SIDE EFFECTS?

- **No relief:** Some patients may not experience symptom relief, or the effect may be temporary.
- **Temporary side effects:** Common effects include Horner's syndrome (drooping eyelid, small pupil, reduced sweating on one side of the face), nasal stuffiness, or a hoarse voice. These typically resolve within hours as the anesthetic wears off.
- **Rare complications:** Risks are low but include infection, bleeding, or nerve irritation. Extremely rare risks involve pneumothorax (collapsed lung), seizures (from accidental vascular injection), or allergic reactions to the medication.
- **Soreness:** Mild discomfort at the injection site may last 1-2 days.



BEFORE THE PROCEDURE:

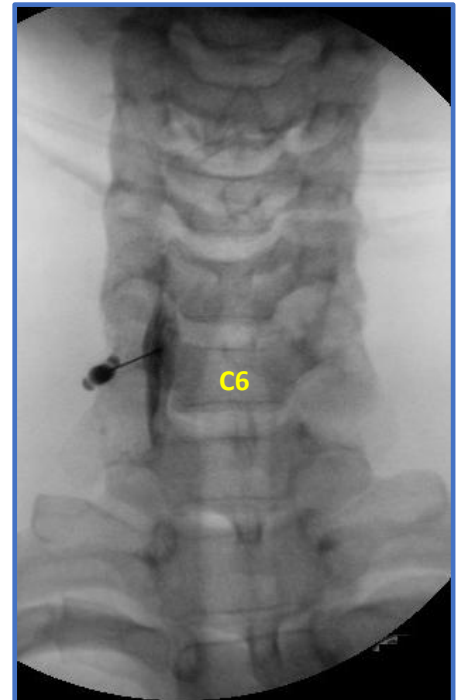
- **Medication Review:** Inform your provider about all medications, especially blood thinners (e.g., aspirin, warfarin), as these may need to be adjusted or stopped temporarily.
- **Medical Conditions:** Notify us of any conditions like lung disease, infections, or allergies to contrast dye or anesthetics.
- **Diet:** For office-based procedures, eat normally. If IV sedation is planned at a surgery center, fasting may be required (specific instructions will be provided).

THE DAY OF THE PROCEDURE:

- **Preparation:** Arrange for a driver, as temporary side effects or sedation may affect your ability to drive. Wear loose, comfortable clothing with easy access to the neck.
- **Procedure:** The procedure takes about 10-15 minutes. You'll lie on your back, and imaging guidance ensures accurate needle placement. A small amount of anesthetic is injected near the stellate ganglion.
- **Afterward:** You'll be monitored for 15-30 minutes to check for side effects like Horner's syndrome, which confirms the block's effect. Post-procedure instructions will be provided before discharge.

WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER THE PROCEDURE:

- **Activity Restrictions:** If you have CRPS, move and exercise your hand/upper limb as much as possible immediately after the block for the next several hours. Some patients schedule hand therapy right after the injection. For other patients, resting the remainder of the day is recommended. Resume your normal diet and shower as usual, but avoid soaking the injection site (e.g., baths, hot tubs) for 2 days.
- **Immediate relief?:** Pain or symptom relief may begin within minutes to hours, depending on the condition. The anesthetic's effect may wear off after a few hours, but some patients experience longer-lasting benefits (especially if steroid is used).
- **Post-procedure soreness:** Mild soreness or bruising at the injection site is normal. Apply ice packs (15-20 minutes every 1-2 hours) to ease discomfort. Avoid heat for 1-2 days.
- **Full effect:** Relief varies widely. Some patients notice improvement for days to weeks, while others may need repeat blocks for sustained results. For conditions like PTSD, symptom changes may take weeks to months to manifest.
- **Follow-up:** A 1-2 week check-in will assess your response and discuss next steps, such as repeat blocks or complementary treatments.



A needle is placed at C6 and dye is injected under x-ray to show spread to the stellate ganglion.

***If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our clinic at (775) 870-1480.
We're here to support your recovery journey.***